



December 15, 2005

Providence man pleads guilty to drug and gun charges

Ronald Hall, 23, of Providence, has pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of firearms and possessing crack cocaine. Providence Police detectives arrested Hall in July after seeing him run into a house on Chester Street, carrying a gun.

The office of United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the guilty plea, which Hall entered yesterday before U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith in U.S. District Court, Providence.

At the plea hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter F. Neronha said that the government could prove that, on July 20, Providence Police detectives saw Hall outside a Chester Street house. As they approached him, Hall ran into the house, holding a black handgun, which detectives saw when he tripped while running up the front steps. Detectives followed Hall into the house and recovered the gun, a 9mm pistol, from a chair where Hall had stashed it. They also seized another gun, a .32 caliber pistol, and a bag containing little more than five grams of crack cocaine.

Hall is detained pending sentencing, which is scheduled for March 3. The maximum penalty for being a felon in possession of a firearm is 10 years in prison. Possession of more than five grams of crack cocaine carries a penalty of five to 20 years in prison. Each offense also has a maximum fine of \$250,000.

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Providence Police and the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives** investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Neronha is prosecuting it as part of **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, the U.S. Attorney's Office, working with Providence Police, ATF, the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, and other agencies, aggressively prosecutes federal firearms offenses in an effort to incarcerate those responsible for gun violence and deter others from committing gun crimes. Since 2001, federal firearms prosecutions in Rhode Island have more than doubled and gun offenders have been sentenced to a total of more than 650 years in federal prison.

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